

## **Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust launches new Mental Health Service in Wokingham**

A new mental health and wellbeing service which provides early interventions for adults with significant mental illness is available for Wokingham residents from this week. Delivered by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, the Mental Health Integrated Community Service (MHICS) will provide specialist mental health support within the community, focussing on recovery and resilience.

Working in collaboration with the local authority and voluntary sector, a multidisciplinary team comprising of mental health professionals, pharmacists, community connectors, psychiatrists, and psychologists will provide specialist support for significant mental illness, as well as support with other factors that impact on wellbeing, such as housing, employment, and physical health.

People living in Wokingham can access the new service through several referral routes including GP's, talking therapists, mental health practitioners, social prescribers, voluntary sector workers, local authority staff and community mental health teams. An informal telephone conversation made within four weeks of referral will help determine the type of support needed.

Support provided by the service includes care plans to help the individual achieve their goals, support and monitoring of medicine and access to psychiatric consultations. MHICS also works closely with specialist voluntary sector partners (known as 'Community Connectors') within the service who have knowledge of the local area and can help with access to drug and alcohol groups, social networks to combat loneliness, and activities to enhance wellbeing.

MHICS is the first stage of an extensive programme to transform community mental health services across Berkshire, in line with NHS England's Community Mental Health Framework. Wokingham is the latest area to benefit from MHICS, with the service having previously launched in Reading, Bracknell, Slough, Windsor, Ascot, and Maidenhead.

Leanne Ballantyne, Clinical Transformation Lead for West Berkshire, at Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, says:

"Mental health services are struggling to meet demand, so we are transforming our services to meet the needs of our local population. MHICS tailors its input for each individual based on their specific needs and past experiences, collaborating with them to create a care plan that addresses their mental health. This work is done in a Primary Care setting to cause as little disruption to the person's life as possible."

Councillor David Hare, executive member for health, wellbeing, and adult services at Wokingham Borough Council, said:

"I am pleased to see the Mental Health Integrated Community Service is launching in Wokingham Borough. This will give our residents access to a wide range of support and help to bridge the gap for those adults who struggle to engage with other mental health services. Ensuring our residents have access to the right help when they need it is a key priority for us and the events of the last few years have demonstrated to all of us just how important it is to look after our mental health."

Find out more information about the MHICS service on [Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust website](#).

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## Notes to editors:

### **About the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme (CMHTP)**

In line with NHS England's Community Mental Health Framework, CMHTP aims to transform services for people with significant mental illnesses, providing holistic care for people across Berkshire.

[Visit the CMHTP information page](#)

### **About Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust provides specialist mental health and community health services to a population of around 900,000 within Berkshire. We operate from more than 100 sites across the county but the vast majority of the people we care for are supported in their own homes. We have 216 mental health inpatient beds and 180 community hospital beds in five locations. Visit [www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk)

The Trust is rated by the CQC as Outstanding

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